



System Recommendations

Overview

The future greenways system in Asheville is envisioned as a multi-objective system. Every greenway in Asheville should not be viewed solely as a recreational resource, but should instead fulfill multiple objectives. These objectives can include better floodplain management, increased wildlife habitat and improved water quality. Since greenways typically incorporate trails, the objectives of passive recreation and environmental education can also be fulfilled along some corridors. Even on-road greenway corridors, which include sidewalks and bikeways, can serve multiple objectives as fitness and transportation resources, which help improve air quality.

Recommendations for a system of multi-objective greenways in Asheville are based largely on community input from the general public, businesses, civic and community organizations, and public agencies. At the beginning of the planning process, a number of potential greenway corridors were identified through a meeting with City staff. These corridors were evaluated and presented in map form at meetings with the Citizens Advisory Committee, meetings with interested parties, a City Council worksession, and four public workshops. All public comments received from these meetings and workshops were incorporated into the recommendations for the greenway system.



Proposed greenway corridors are located along natural and man-made linear corridors which generally follow roadways, ridgetops and waterways within the study limits. In this manner, greenways will fulfill objectives related to alternative transportation, natural resource conservation, water quality and floodplain management, in addition to their function as recreational resources. Corridors were also selected to ensure development of a continuous system of greenways located throughout North, South, East, West and Central Asheville which could extend into neighboring jurisdictions (sections of corridors located outside the City are subject to county participation).

A total of 14 corridors are proposed as the primary greenway system for Asheville (please refer to map). The remaining corridors are considered neighborhood greenways and serve as an enhancement of and addition to the primary system. Together, the primary system and neighborhood greenways make up the entire proposed Asheville Greenway System. This system defines the location of multi-objective greenway corridors and does not reflect specific greenway routing or the development and location of trails and other public access facilities. A site-specific evaluation and plan for each corridor will need to be completed before final greenway routing, level of use and facility development are determined.

The primary greenway system includes corridors in every section of the City. In the south, the Hendersonville Road corridor is a north-south route which connect the downtown and Swannanoa River with southern Asheville. In the west, Brevard Road and the French Broad River are identified as north-south routes while Hominy Creek, the Emma Road stream corridor and Haywood Road serve as east-west routes. In the east, the Swannanoa is an east-west corridor which connects to the north-south Haw Creek corridor. In the north, Beaverdam Creek/Road connects the French Broad with the Blue Ridge Parkway (running east-west) while Town Mountain Road and Kimberly Avenue serve as north-south corridors. The downtown area is served by the Reed Creek greenway corridor, as well as connections along Nasty Branch and Ashland Avenue/McDowell Street, which together form an “emerald necklace” around the downtown and connecting to the French Broad River corridor.

Greenway Corridors

Facility Development and Use

The level of facility development and use for a greenway corridor could vary significantly. Some could contain paved trails for multiple uses (walking, bicycling, rollerblading, cross country skiing), others could contain unpaved trails for multiple or single uses, and some may not contain trails. Moreover, levels of facility development and use could vary within individual corridors. During the second series of community workshops, participants were asked to complete a corridor use survey to determine what they felt were the most appropriate levels of use for the primary greenway corridors. The results of this survey are provided later in this chapter. Levels of development and use should be assigned to specific corridors based on more detailed studies of each corridor and further community involvement.

Level 1: No facility development

This designation would apply to corridors containing environmentally sensitive areas, steep slopes, wetlands or other constraints that make greenway facility development undesirable or impossible. The corridor would remain primarily in a natural state as human access would be extremely limited. Other functions for these corridors would include floodplain management, water quality protection and conservation of important habitat for wildlife and plants. The restoration of streambanks and revegetation of natural areas may be necessary along these corridors to facilitate a multi-objective corridor. These activities could also take place along those greenways containing trails and other facilities, in order to maximize the water quality, wildlife habitat and other functions of level 2 through level 4 greenway corridors.



Level 2: Limited development, low impact uses

This designation would apply to corridors containing environmentally sensitive areas that limit the extent of greenway facility development. The corridor would remain primarily in a natural state, with gravel or dirt trails (4 to 6 feet wide) for use by one or two low impact user groups, such as hikers and/or equestrians. Trail Head facilities and other amenities (such as signage and picnic tables) would be limited.





Level 3: Multi-use unpaved trail development

This designation would apply to greenway corridors where the adjacent natural areas, rural landscapes or historic sites dictate a more natural facility development objective, corridors located outside of areas which experience frequent flooding, or greenways where use is anticipated to be lower than in other areas and primarily recreational. The unpaved trails could be surfaced with gravel or crushed stone (10 to 12 feet wide) for use by several user groups, such as bicyclists, joggers, and equestrians. Wheelchair users and persons with strollers can use unpaved trails if they are

designed to ADA standards and surfaced with compacted crushed stone. Trail Head facilities and other amenities (such as benches, signage and picnic tables) would be developed as needed where appropriate.

Level 4: Multi-use paved trail development

This designation would apply to corridors where high use is anticipated; greenways that do not contain environmentally sensitive areas; corridors which will most likely be used as transportation routes; greenways located within frequently flooded areas; or those located in urban settings. The paved trails could be surfaced with asphalt or concrete (10 to 12 feet wide) for use by several user groups, such as bicyclists, joggers, wheelchair users and rollerbladers. Although asphalt is the most common paved surface used for greenway trails, concrete is best for areas experiencing frequent flooding. Trail Head facilities and other amenities (such as lights, benches, and signage) would be developed as needed where appropriate.



Level 5: On-road (sidewalks and bikeways)

This designation would apply to corridors in urban areas where an off-road option is not possible, or corridors which function as connections between off-road trails and major origins and destinations. On-road greenways would consist of sidewalks for pedestrian use and bikeways for cyclists. Bikeways can vary from 6-foot wide bicycle lanes (complete with pavement striping and signage) to 4-foot wide paved roadway shoulders to a 14-foot wide curb lane (to be shared by cyclists and motorists). Pedestrian-scale lighting, street trees, benches and other amenities could be developed to encourage sidewalk use.





Level 6: Water Based Trails

This designation applies to those rivers and streams that can successfully accommodate and/or which are designated to support canoeing, kayaking and boating. Water based trails can be designed with features and facilities that make this activity more enjoyable for residents, including signage systems, improved rapids, safety systems, etc.



Corridor Descriptions

The primary system is only the backbone of the entire City-wide greenway system. Neighborhood greenways are very important components of the system, because they will provide essential routes which support the primary corridors. Due to the number of these possible neighborhood connections, they are listed but not described in detail in this Master Plan.

Each of the primary greenway corridors recommended for development is described as follows. The corridors are not listed in priority order. The location of these corridors is depicted on the Greenway System Maps.

